Our heritage

Publishing the news...at Seibert!

The Seibert Settler

SEIBERT, COLORADO, 1 RIDAY, JUNE 7, 1985

Three Perish as 11-Inch Rain Breaks Century Record

"Service" Means Much to Everyone Following Catastrophe Last Weekend

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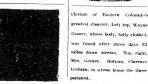
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Mail arrived by special truck in evarge of a special deputy from Lion shortly after non Wedresday be went through to Burlinston and cought more mail on his return.

Much to Everyone ophe Last Weekend

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Flood Unearths

Land, Machinery. Cattle Destroyed

Communication Severed

During the homestead rush in Kit Carson County in 1906, a newspaper, the Hoyt Free Press, was started at the small community of Hoyt, about three or four miles north of present-day Seibert. The paper later was moved to Seibert, where it was known as the Seibert Settler, and later as the Prairie Settler.

In September, 1920, the paper was all but defunct when it was taken over by V.S. FitzPatrick, a man with five-years of newspaper experience with the Steamboat Pilot, the Haxtun Harvest, and a paper at Oak Creek behind him, and by his wife, Loretta, an experienced lawyer's secretary.

The last issue of the paper had been published 23 weeks before. But for the tolerance of the postmaster, Mrs. Mae Cates, the paper would have been declared dead and its second class mailing privilege cancelled. Even so, the new owners still had to change the dateline a week at a time, and print two copies for each of the 23 weeks so the files could be completed.

The newspaper press was an ancient "Washington Mankiller," so the Fitz-Patricks changed from a six-column to a four-column tabloid format so the paper could be printed on a 10"x 15" Gordon job press.

The paper was purchased from A.V. Jessee, president of the Seibert State Bank, and Clyde Tavenner, a wheat farmer who had been a Congressman in Illinois three times and who headed the movement to win independence for the Phillipine Republic.

Tavenner helped the FitzPatricks win out with the Settler, too. Having been an apprentice printer in his youth, he now sat up nights, hand-setting type for the paper. But soon, the owners made arrangements with Will Borland at the Flagler News to set their type on his Linotype, until they had their own such machine in a couple of years.

Knowing that FitzPatrick was an experienced band leader, the community raised money through an auction of donated articles to equip a band he would form. The band became good, and for years dominated the musical scene all over that region.

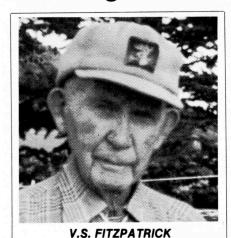
Three local high school boys, Charles Conley, Lindley Cates and Vern Carpenter, were messing with "wireless

(Please see next page.)

TRAGEDY RECORDED—This issue of The Seibert Settler recorded the tragedy of the 1935 flood, which left death and destruction in its wake. But as a story at the lower right indicates, the terrible flood also unearthed prehistoric evidence of the time when eastern Colorado was on the sea shore.

(Copy courtesy of Twila Gorton)

Our heritage...



(Continued from last page.)

transmission." Mostly as a stunt, the Seibert Settler fostered their efforts, using news bulletins they received, and was the first newspaper in the United States to have a column of radio news. The paper also had 28 rural correspondents and three staff columnists.

Although the newspaper was doing well, domestic troubles came. Loretta first spent a summer in Wyoming, then after returning, soon left as secretary with the Guldmans, owners of Denver's "Golden Eagle" store, for Europe and the Holy Land.

Fitz continued the paper for a year, then leased it to Chase Day, and with his new Packard and Airedale dog, he headed for New York. From there, playing in the ship's band, he traveled to South Africa, and eventually trekked inland to the gold and diamond mines.

After returning to this country, he drove through Canada to South Dakota, then south to Denver, where he went to work for Denver Developers, selling city lots east of Colorado Boulevard on Eighth Avenue. Some lots which he sold for \$320 a pair later re-sold for \$12,000.

In early 1932, yielding to pleas of A.V. Jessee and Chris Snyder, new cashier of the Seibert bank, FitzPatrick returned to Seibert and took over the Settler.

The depression and dust bowl struck later that year, and the bank went broke in December. The Seibert Settler had \$700 on deposit, but owed the bank \$1,000. The Settler was going broke, too.

But then came a young man with a plan for a county directory. He had no money, but needed printing. The Seibert Settler-did the job; the young man went out and collected for the advertising, and disappeared, owing \$420.

In a flash of inspiration, FitzPatrick decided the Seibert Settler would go into

the directory business. Starting with \$200 borrowed from Ella Jessee, now widow of A.V., and with an employee, Bonny Gaunt, as partner, The National Directory Company went on for eight years to cover more than 200 counties in Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Missouri, with as many as 42 workers in the field and 19 in the printing plant, including many high school students who worked before and after school and on off-days to help keep food on the family tables.

During this period, FitzPatrick had figured prominantly in organization of The Plainsmen's Association, with 7,000 members over seven states. The Seibert Settler was the official publication of this body. In a couple of years, the association resolved into state bodies and local organizations, still promoting the Charles T. Peacock damming-lister type of summer fallow which led into modern farming methods.

The Seibert Settler and National Directory Company saved thousands of dollars after FitzPatrick took a course in photoengraving. He purchased equipment and trained employees to make the hundreds of "cuts" used in the business and making thousands for other printers.

Following the depression, the Seibert Settler changed to tri-weekly, and was booming. It seemed a good time to sell.

Judson W. Loveridge, claiming to be an experienced newspaperman, bought the paper. He immediately fired part of the trained employees, raised prices, and tried to do work of which he was not capable. Going broke, he sued Fitz-Patrick for having made false claims in selling, but before long, he sent out exactly the same sales sheet that Fitz had used. The Settler's lawyer "put him up a tree," as he said. Loveridge paid up and got out.

The Seibert Settler was sold to T. Guard, owner of the Flagler News, who changed it to a full page in the News around 1940.

(Information for this article was provided by V.S. FitzPatrick, who will be 100 in January, 1986.)

The Seibert Settler coined a number of slogans, among them: "Voice of the Seibert country;" "If the Lord made a better place than the Seibert country, He kept if for Himself;" and "Ten cows, twenty sows and 200 hens on every Seibert farm."

In a few years, the latter slogan came true. Then the Seibert Settler got out a "poultry edition." Five thousand copies were bought by the Gold Bond Hatcheries of Burlington, and were distributed in nearby counties.

According to the Colorado Historical Society, the *Prairie Settler* published weekly from 1907 until April, 1942. However, there were other newspapers in Seibert, as well, including: The *Seibert Free Press*, 1887-1890; the *Seibert Boomerang*, 1911-1912; and the *Seibert Monitor*, 1913-1916.



NATIONAL DIRECTORY Company production crew, 1936, in cluded, from left, Chink Perrine, Duane Oldson, V.S. FitzPatrick, Louise Simpson, Bonny Gaunt (later Gould), Leona Scheidegger and Lucille Knowland.

(Photo reprinted from "Back Trail," by V.S. FitzPatrick)